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A True Story of general
farming on ten acres.
By William Henry Harrison.





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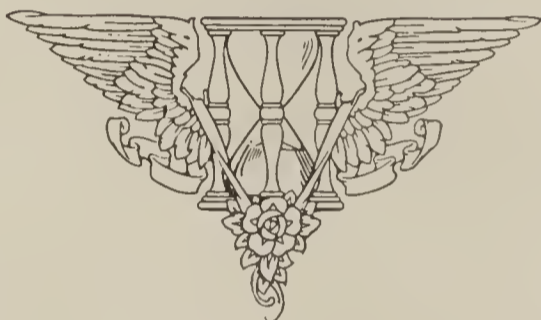
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A True Story of General Farming on Ten Acres



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A True Story of General Farming on Ten Acres



Mr. and Mrs. Bruce—Owners of the Farm

Having heard that a wide-awake progressive farmer, a few miles from our colony, was demonstrating what can be done on a ten acre farm, in northwest Louisiana highlands, we hunted him up and spent a day with him. The one who told us about this little farm was so enthusiastic over the results that are being obtained, that we expected to find the place devoted to fruit culture under the most scientific, improved methods, and truck farming in its most up-to-date form. To our surprise we found neither being done, but only the things that the average farmer does everywhere.

After thinking over what we saw and heard, we concluded that a description of his methods and the results secured would be the best means of convincing folks in other sections of the

country of the ease with which one may live in comfort and save money on a ten acre farm in this, the highest and most healthful and most delightful portion of Louisiana. Here the ground can be plowed and some crop planted every month of the twelve; the folks live with doors and windows open most of the year, and the song birds sing the year through. The summers are mild, being tempered by cooling breezes from the Gulf of Mexico, making it always cool in the shade, with every night cool enough for covers.

In 1907 Mr. Bruce, the owner of this little farm, was clerking in a store and living in a rented home. The salary was sufficient to provide a good living, but after paying house rent and the usual household expenses he had nothing left to lay aside for a rainy day. He was in the same condition as tens of thousands of wage earners in the cities—receiving good wages and spending it all for the family expenses—living in a home that is owned by some one else.

Mrs. Bruce, with wise foresight, called her husband's attention to the fact that they were fifty-five years old, and should have a home of their own, and that it was high time they set about it.

After deciding to get a home, and, as Mr. Bruce expressed it, "Have a home, live at home, and board at the same place," he looked around until he found an opportunity to buy a ten acre farm on favorable terms in the highlands of Louisiana.

They took possession of their new home on December 1st, 1907. The place was "stocked" with one horse, three cows, and a young heifer, three common brood sows, and twenty-five hens. During the first six months the hens laid eggs to the amount of \$1.50 for each hen, besides raising enough chicks to pay all expenses, provide broilers for the table use, and increase the flock of hens to forty in the fall. Mrs. Bruce has since kept a flock of forty hens, as that is as many as can be comfortably accommodated in the poultry house.

Mr. Bruce bought some lumber at a nearby mill and built sheds around the small barn, making five box stalls for his horse and cows. He also built a shed for his compost heap.

I shall not weary you with the details of his work for 1908

and 1909, but simply state results. He farmed four acres and one-half and cleared \$450 each year. That was above his living and all expenses. For 1910 he *cleared* \$600.00! In the following pages we shall tell you how he did it.



The Cow Pea Plant*

In the fall of 1909 he plowed up one and one-half acres of the pasture, giving him six acres for crops. About October first he sowed one acre with Texas rust proof oats, and harvested them

*From Farm Bulletin on Cow Peas.

May 25th. They were not threshed, but tied in bundles. The heads were heavy, and so was the straw. Good judges estimated the yield of oats to be 40 bushels or more and one ton of straw. His way of feeding them was to run them through a cutting machine, easily turned by hand, cutting the straw and heads into half-inch lengths. He dampened and salted this and it was eaten up clean by both the cows and the horse. The oat field was pastured during the winter when the ground was dry—an average of half the time. After they were harvested the ground was plowed and sowed broadcast with one bushel of cow peas. They were mowed for hay on Sept. 15th, and the acre produced three tons of dry hay of fine quality. Neither the oats nor the cow pea hay are figured in the returns from the farm, as they were fed on the place. The oats could have been sold for 60 cents per bushel, making \$24.00, and the straw for \$6.00, making a total value for the oat crop of \$30.00. The cow pea hay was selling for \$15.00 per ton, locally, which would have added \$45.00 to the returns from that acre, giving a total revenue of \$75.00 if the crops had been sold instead of fed on the place.

The cow pea is one of several valuable forage plants of the south. Certain nitrogen bacteria live on the roots and after breathing the air of the soil, digest the nitrogen and leave it attached to the roots in such form that any plant may make use of it. The All Wise Creator has placed a store of nitrogen above each acre of land in the world estimated at several million dollars in value. By growing cow peas Mr. Bruce makes use of this gold mine of immense worth, placed at his hand for the asking, thereby avoiding the necessity of purchasing high-priced nitrogenous fertilizers. In the north the progressive farmer uses red clover for improving his soil. A two year old red clover sod, turned under will not add any more fertilizing elements than will a crop of cow peas that can be grown in ninety days, as a catch crop, after some other crop has been harvested. The roots on that acre of cow peas left twelve dollars worth of nitrogen in the soil, to say nothing of the humus, and the mechanical action in opening up and making the ground more porous. That acre was plowed and sowed to rye and rape and will, from November 15th until spring, furnish green feed for his pigs and for his cows part of the time. Next year it will be used for corn and peas.

About February 10th, 1910, he planted one acre with Irish potatoes, but the unprecedented cold and dry weather of April about ruined them, and he only sold 50 bushels at 75 cents per bushel, making \$37.50 from the crop. One-half of this acre was planted with Spanish peanuts after the potatoes were harvested. That variety of peanuts is more dependable than other varieties, and is the one usually grown by the farmers of North Louisiana. It has an upright growth and the nuts grow close together near



Spanish Peanuts from Farm Bulletin No. 356

the main stem, and most of them will cling to the plant when it is pulled. They are as certain a crop as one can plant, and can be planted after winter oats are harvested, or after the spring crop of Irish potatoes, or may follow any spring crop, such as English peas, string beans, cabbage, or the hay crop from burr clover, crimson clover or winter vetch. The nuts are very easy to grow. They are planted in rows two and a half to three feet apart, and twelve inches apart in the rows. They will grow and do fairly well on land that is too poor for corn, and will give from twenty to one hundred bushels of nuts per acre, according

to soil and season, and the nuts can be sold at an average price of \$1.00 per bushel. The vines will make a ton and a half of fine hay to the acre. It is worth \$12.00 to \$15.00 per ton. Analysis shows peanut hay to have only ten per cent. less of digestible nutrients than alfalfa. All of the farm stock prefer peanut hay to any other. Many growers turn their hogs into the peanut patch and let them eat the tops and root out the nuts. The southern experiment stations have demonstrated that pork can be made for two cents per pound with 70 cent per bushel corn and peanut pasture. The peanut and pig will yet put to flight the boll weevil and turn many struggling cotton farmers into men of wealth.



Peanuts Stacked Around Poles

Peanuts are as easily grown as corn, requiring practically the same cultivation.

If the crop is to be turned over to the hogs to gather, the large varieties of peanuts are used by some growers. They are more scattered in the ground, but they yield more vines and nuts in a favorable season than the Spanish variety, and the nuts may be left in the ground all winter without sprouting.

On August 15th Mr. Bruce harvested twenty-five bushels of nuts and one ton of hay from the half acre. The nuts could have been sold for \$1.00 per bushel and the hay for \$15.00. Here is a return of \$40.00 from the second crop on one-half an acre. It is not counted in the returns from the place as the nuts and hay were fed at home.

The other half of the acre of Irish potato land was set to sweet potatoes—the genuine Dooley yam. Last year he got a

crop of 100 bushels from one-third of an acre, but the dry weather this year hurt the yield. He grew 75 bushels of marketable potatoes from the half acre. He sells all he grows at \$1.00 per bushel. He was feeding the vines to his cows. How they did like them, and how the milk did flow! In the south, sweet potatoes are grown mainly from pieces of vines. If a man wants to grow 10 acres of sweet potatoes he will bed out about three bushels of potatoes and set out the little plants or "draws" in rows across his field. When the vines get to growing in good shape they are cut into lengths about 15 inches long and set out, usually



Sweet Potato Vines. Lima Beans in Background.

by jabbing them in with a stick and stepping on them to press down the dirt. It is a benefit to the crop to have the vines cut or trimmed off in this way, and the pieces of vines make more and better potatoes than the plants. The sweet potato is a good crop for market and for hog raising. They are no more work or expense to grow than corn and will produce from 100 bushels to 500 bushels per acre, according to conditions of the soil and the season.

Like any wise farmer, Mr. Bruce put out a good garden. He did not plan to do market gardening, but folks came and insisted on buying, until the returns from such sales amounted to \$75.00 during the season.

The remaining four acres of the farm were planted to corn and cow peas. The corn was planted in February. When the unusually late freeze came in April, it was hip high. He thought at first that it was entirely ruined, but it came out fairly well, and from the four acres he gathered 200 bushels. He has a good variety of corn and takes care in selecting his seed, and sells his entire crop for seed at \$1.00 per bushel. This gives him \$200.00 for his crop of corn. The returns would be practically the same if he kept it until spring and sold it for feed, as corn usually sells for \$1.00 per bushel during the spring and summer.



Corn and Cow Pea Field

Just ahead of the last cultivation he sowed broadcast one bushel of the Clay variety of cow peas to the acre. He gathered 60 bushels of peas from the four acres. They will be kept until spring and sold and will bring from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per bushel. In the spring of 1910 they sold up to \$4.00 per bushel, and many farmers who wanted them were unable to get any even at that high price. In his figures for the returns for 1910, Mr. Bruce has only counted the cow peas at \$2.00 per bushel, \$120.00 for the crop, which is from \$30.00 to \$60.00 less than he may reasonably expect.

Mr. Bruce has a small bunch of hogs. I think, large and small, there were 19 head. He will make enough meat to last them through the year and have 1,000 pounds of pork for sale.

He counts that in his estimate as \$100.00. It will no doubt bring considerably more, as part of it will be sold as cured meat.

When Mr. Bruce bought his place it was in a very bad condition, having been poorly farmed for years, until it was very much run down. The neighbors said it was "worn out," and that the Bruces would starve if they depended on the place for a living. Hon. James Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture, says there is no such thing as "worn out land." It may become depleted of certain elements by improper handling, but those elements are easily supplied with proper handling, and the land and the soil



Corn and Cow Peas. Mr. Bruce Stands 5 ft. 10 in.

brought into condition for producing good crops. Mr. Bruce grew 35 bushels of corn to the acre in 1908, 50 bushels to the acre in 1909, and for 1910 expected a crop of 75 bushels to the acre, and would have gotten that amount but for the unusual late freeze in April. It was no fault of his that the crop was cut to 50 bushels per acre. Next year he expects 100 bushels of corn to the acre from all he plants, and we predict that he will get it. He said if he had begun with new land, such as we are offering, instead of a run down place, he would have grown 100 bushels per acre the second year.

The four cows and 40 hens return an average of \$20.00 per month, \$240.00 for the year, from the sale of butter and eggs.

They have no expense for labor. Mrs. Bruce attends to the housework and looks after the chickens. Mr. Bruce milks the cows, runs the milk through the cream separator, does the churning, and all of the farm work. In explaining how easy his work is now, compared with standing behind the counter all day, Mr. Bruce said: "I only play at work. If necessity required, I could cultivate every row of my crops in one day, by beginning at daylight and working until dark." As a rule, they both take long naps every day after dinner.

income of this little farm, if the owner would change his common cows to good registered Jerseys. The change could be made gradually by starting with one or two young heifers, and it would not take long to have all registered Jerseys. The calves would be worth \$100.00 more per year than his common calves, and the cream would be worth another \$100.00 because of the increased production of butter.

Another \$100.00 could be added to the net income without increasing the expense account any by having a flock of some standard breed of thoroughbred fowls instead of their present flock. \$100.00 would be a small sum to expect from the sale of eggs for hatching and from the sale of an occasional pen of birds for breeders, without making any special effort along that line.

Another \$100.00 could be added to the profit side of their ledger by having only registered hogs of any of the popular breeds. A start could be made from the purchase of a registered sow, and a herd would soon be established, all choice registered stock. The sale of only a few pairs of breeders would increase the profits without adding to the expenses. Mr. Bruce is awake to all of these possibilities, and in a few years more will be able to show a balance sheet of double the amount of the very handsome one for 1910.

The Secret of His Success

Taking into consideration all that is known about farming, stock raising and fertilizing, some readers may think that is not a good heading. It is the easy, simple things that are more often neglected. Mr. Bruce is a man of good brain and quick perception, but it is not on that account he makes such a fine profit from his little farm.

The secret of the results is the compost heap. He devotes one-half day each month to work that the average farmer neglects. Each of the five box stalls is cleaned, partially as needed, but once a month they are all cleaned thoroughly, and he puts in a new bed, 12 to 15 inches deep, of dead grass, waste hay or leaves from the nearby forest. The material that is removed is put in the compost pen, an open shed, with a roof of boards. He does not have a tight roof, as he wants some rain to drip through onto the pile of compost. About every foot of the compost is



Fig Tree, 10 Years Old

covered with two or three inches of dirt, which aids in preventing the escape of ammonia and makes it pleasanter in handling the mass when it is spread on the land. He aids decomposition by occasionally scattering a little phosphate over the pile. He has found by experiment that the manure saved in this way, during one year from one cow, put on an acre of land will increase the crop on that acre 25 bushels of corn and 10 bushels of cow peas. With corn at 50 cents per bushel, and cow peas at \$2.50 per bushel, both of which usually sell for more, there is a return of \$37.50 from an acre of land, half a day extra work each month and a little trouble of turning the cow into her box stall each evening.

More Profits in the Future

Mr. Bruce is planning to set out 50 fig trees. They are easily grown from cuttings of new growth. That number of trees can be set out around a farm without taking up any room wanted for crops. The fig delights in a home in fence corners and by the side of barns and sheds—spaces that would not otherwise be used for any purpose. They begin to bear in two years and give a crop every year. In cases of a late spring frost, they wait a few weeks and put out another full crop, instead of waiting until another year like other fruit trees. Twice in the memory of the oldest citizens the fig trees have been frozen to the ground, but the roots were uninjured. They put out a strong growth the same season, and the following year produced a crop of figs. There is no crop of fruit so certain as figs, and none more profitable when they are utilized the right way. The fig tree shown in the illustration gave a crop of thirty bushels of figs during the season of 1910. This is a large tree, and yet it may seem to you that thirty bushels is a very large crop. It will not seem so large when you know that from such a tree you can gather bucketfuls of ripe figs every day for from four to eight weeks. A quart of figs will make a pint of preserves. Thirty bushels will fill forty dozen pint jars. At \$3.00 per dozen jars that would make a return of \$120.00 from one tree. You can figure the profit by deducting cost of jars, about fifty cents per dozen, and a little less than a pound of sugar for each pint. Preserving plants pay from five cents to ten cents per quart for ripe figs. At five cents per quart the thirty bushels gathered from the tree shown in the illustration would bring a return of \$48.00. Fifty such trees would, at that rate, amount to \$2,400.00, and not interfere in any way with other farm crops. Mr. Bruce will find that his fifty fig trees will add a very considerable sum to his income even while the trees are young.

Looking Farther into the Future for More Profits

Mr. Bruce is just waking to the possibilities of profits from growing pecans. They grow wild in portions of the parish and the hickory, a sister tree, is found everywhere. It is an entirely practical scheme for Mr. Bruce to set out his entire farm to pecans. They should be set 60 feet apart, 12 trees to the acre. They take up such a small portion of the space that they will interfere very little with the crops grown between the trees. The pecan lives to be centuries old, and when ten to twelve years old

will begin to return good crops. By setting only choice varieties of large paper shell pecans, one can get from 50 cents to 75 cents per pound for the nuts. At half that price a ten year old tree should return \$10.00 to \$15.00 worth of nuts. From that age on the crop will increase very fast. It is not uncommon for a tree, twenty-five years old, to produce nuts to the value of \$100.00 or more. 120 such trees would mean an income of \$12,000.00 from a single crop. Every owner of land should set out a few acres of choice pecans and take good care of them for a few years until they get a good start. He can thereby provide a good living for his old age, and leave behind a legacy that will be far more valuable to his children and grandchildren than any life insurance policy he may be able to carry. By planting nuts where the trees are wanted, and then budding or grafting with the desired variety, the expense is not great to get a pecan grove started. A little attention, and a little patience is all that is required to lay a sure foundation for an old age free from worry or hard work.

A Statement of Results for 1910

Butter and eggs sold during the year.....	\$240.00
200 bu. corn sold for seed at \$1.00 per bu..	200.00
60 bushels cow peas at \$2.00 per bushel....	120.00
1,000 pounds of pork at 10 cents per lb....	100.00
75 bushels sweet potatoes, at \$1.00 per bu..	75.00
Vegetables sold from the garden.....	75.00
50 bushels Irish potatoes at 75 cts. per bu..	37.50
	\$847.50
Vacation trip for himself and wife	
during August	\$ 85.00
Other expenses not to exceed....	162.50
	\$247.50
Net profit for 1910.....	\$600.00

They took life comparatively easy, had a good time, lived well, under their own "vine and fig tree," and had a surplus of six hundred dollars for investment. A few cows, a few pigs, a few chickens, and just plain ordinary farm crops that anyone can grow who has sense enough to hold a plow or handle a shovel. When I told Mr. Bruce that I should tell the world about his little farm he said, "Tell them that my message to them is: *COME THOU AND DO LIKEWISE.*"

W. H. HARRISON, Jr.

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